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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
PRODUCTION AND MARKETING ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, 25, D. C.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE BRANCH
ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER No. 5

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

ITINERARY OF M W BAKER

Mr. M. W. Baker will be in Chicago March 11, 12 and 13th for the Inspector's Training School.

March 14th and 15th he will meet with Federal and State officials on inspection and standardization problems at Lansing, Michigan.

March 18th, 19th and 20th Mr. Baker will be at Grand Forks, North Dakota and will return to Washington, March 25th.

E. A. Meyer, Director

FRESH PRODUCTS STANDARDIZATION AND INSPECTION DIVISION

CHANGE IN ADDRESS OF INDIANAPOLIS OFFICE

Mr. J. E. Dickerson advises that the Indianapolis office address has been changed to Room 404 B.&O. Building, 220 Virginia Avenue, Indianapolis, 4, Indiana.

CHECK LIST

Copies of check list dated February 1946 of U. S. Standards issued by the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Branch (other than for Canned Products) were sent to all inspectors.

CIRCULAR

Copies of Circular No. 740, "Cold Storage for Apples and Pears" were sent to all inspectors.

POTATO CONFERENCE

The conference on the subject of the advisability of the Department issuing consumer standards for potatoes and other fruits and vegetables was held as scheduled in the Department auditorium February 28. Most of the important potato producing States sent one or more representatives as did

several Nation-wide consumer groups. Many growers and shippers expressed themselves as not favoring the issuance of consumer standards at this time especially with so many size classifications although most of them recognized that the potato industry would have to do a better job of sorting potatoes in order to satisfy consumers and maintain even present levels of consumption. Consumer representatives generally favored the issuance of consumer standards for potatoes and other products. They suggested that the alphabetical system of nomenclature be used and that potatoes should also be sorted and packed into three or four size classifications which would be described by such simple and well understood descriptive terms as "small," "medium", and "large." Suggestions and criticisms received at the conference will be studied thoroughly before any definite action is taken by the Department.

E. E. Conklin, Chief

MARKET NEWS DIVISION

CREDIT INFORMATION TO OTHER AGENCIES

Whenever information originally released by an agency other than the Production and Marketing Administration is republished, either in whole or in part, by a market news office the agency making the original release should be given be given credit on our reports, showing also the date of release, e.g. "Released by Bureau of Agricultural Economics, December 16". This applies not only to printed releases but also to crop reports or other material sent over the leased wire. Information which originates in P&MA need not be so credited since the headings of our reports cover this.

REPORT ON EQUIPMENT

It has recently come to our attention that many offices have surplus typewriters or mailing room equipment some of which is worn out but was never turned in when new equipment was obtained and some of which is still in good usable condition. A number of offices, for example, have telegraphers typewriters which have never been used since the leased wire was mechanized. Please furnish us with a report by March 15 showing any such equipment held in your office. Show whether this equipment is worn out and suitable only for its "turn in" value or whether it is still usable. You should figure your actual equipment needs and not hold good surplus equipment solely with the thought that it might come in handy some day when a regular piece of equipment needs repairs or adjustment. Also, furnish a second list showing the condition of all regularly used mechanical equipment. A minimum of new equipment may be available but a replacement should be requested for a machine only if it is actually beyond reasonable or satisfactory repair. Furnish AMS and serial numbers on these reports. No report need be made on furniture.

C. D. Schoolcraft, Chief

REGULATORY DIVISION

HOWARD CRATE

The Muckland Celery Packers Assn. of Sarasota, Florida, under date of February 20 mailed announcement to all its brokers advising that future quotations, unless otherwise specified, are to be considered as applying to the 16-inch Howard crate, with the celery packed therein clipped to a minimum of 14 inches. It is understood that this type of crate is used almost exclusively for shipment of celery from the State of Florida. Growers take the position that it is physically impossible to pack celery clipped to 16 inches in the 16-inch Howard crate.

T. C. Curry, In Charge

FRESH DECIDUOUS FRUIT SECTION

FRESH BERRY INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Members of the Fresh Berry Industry Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Office of Price Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture on February 27 to discuss ceiling price regulations for the 1946 crop. At present, the ceiling prices for berries established by Maximum Price Regulation 426, Amendments 33 and 58, effective July 3, 1944, and October 5, 1944, respectively, are in effect for the 1946 crop.

Growers generally report substantial increases in cost, particularly labor, and anticipated increases in container costs. Container supplies are expected to be short in several areas, particularly in the Alabama, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Carolinas areas.

Members of the Committee report that the condition of plantings is generally much better than at this time last season and that, barring spring frosts and generally unfavorable weather conditions, indications are for a greater yield per acre. The 1946 strawberry acreage for harvest in all States is now estimated at 105,810 acres, as compared with 87,480 acres last season. Largest increases are expected in Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

M. McCown, Acting Chief

VEGETABLE DIVISION

PRICE CEILING DISASTER ADJUSTMENTS

Amendment 164 to MPR 426 increases the f.o.b. ceiling price for green peas from $3.50 to $3.60 a bushel, effective February 19 to March 10.

Amendment 165 adjusts the f.o.b. ceiling price for spinach from $1.15 to $1.20 per bushel from February 19 through March 20.

SPECIAL CEILING FOR AIR-BORNE TOMATOES EXTENDED

The Secretary has approved an amendment to MPR 376 proposed by OPA which would extend special ceiling prices for air-borne tomatoes to July 1.

CONFERENCE OF REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Representatives of the Vegetable Division, the Field Service Branch, and the Requirements and Allocations Branch met with the chiefs of the five field Division offices of this Branch on February 26. Discussions covered the subjects of goals, purchase and subsidy programs, and miscellaneous vegetable problems.

ONION PRIORITY FOR WAR SHIPPING ADMINISTRATION

The War Shipping Administration has been granted a priority to purchase 25 cars of onions.

AMENDMENT TO SUBSIDY AGREEMENT

An amendment to the subsidy agreement is being prepared to accord with Amendment 2 to Directive 60, approved February 7, 1946, which extended the 1945 tomato season for subsidy purposes to include canned tomatoes and tomato products packed to and including February 28, 1946.

SWEETPOTATO DEHYDRATION PROGRAM

Some sweetpotato dehydrators have completed their contracts under the dehydration program and others are almost through. Some dehydrators will deliver amounts substantially short of their contracts. It is estimated that a total of between 10 and 11 million pounds of dehydrated sweets will be produced under the program all of which will be delivered to UNRRA.

DISPOSAL OF DEHYDRATED TOMATO FLAKES

A docket is now being prepared authorizing the transfer to the school lunch program of 500,000 pounds of dehydrated tomato flakes now held in CCC inventories.

CCC INVENTORIES OF CANNED VEGETABLES BEING REDUCED

Of canned vegetables purchased for Lend Lease, CCC now has on hand approximately 100,000 cases of canned snap beans, 30,000 to 35,000 cases each of canned beets and carrots, 100,000 cases of peas, 60,000 cases of spinach, and minor quantities of other canned commodities. These quantities are being allocated to the Caribbean school lunch program and to British and Netherland East Indies lend lease programs.

REIMBURSING CANNERS FOR EXCESS LABOR COSTS ON 1944 VEGETABLE PACK

Ceiling price regulations on canned vegetables of the 1944 pack reflected cost increases incurred since the base period in 1941. Certain wage increases were approved retroactively by the War Labor Board for the Pacific Coast states and incurred by canners on the 1944 pack but could not be covered by the price regulations, insofar as price ceilings on sales to civilians were concerned.

Amendment 1 to Directive 25, issued January 11, 1945, directs CCC to absorb increased costs of the 1944 pack of processed fruits and vegetables due to approved wage increases not covered by the 1944 price ceiling regulations, but only to the extent necessary to bring each processor's profit position up to the average for the industry in 1940-41.

A docket is now being prepared to implement the provisions of the directive.

DISPOSITION OF DEHYDRATED ONION INVENTORIES

The sale of one million pounds of dehydrated onion flakes and 500,000 pounds of onion powder from CCC inventories to Basic Vegetable Products Company of San Francisco at 40 cents a pound has been completed.

Agreement has been reached for sale to the C. B. Gentry Company of Los Angeles of 400,000 pounds of onion flakes at 40 cents a pound and the sales contract has been forwarded to them for signing.

The remainder of CCC inventories of onion flakes is being offered back to the original dehydrators at 40 cents a pound. Tentative plans are under way for disposal of approximately one million pounds of CCC onion powder inventories through the UNRRA dry soup program. Negotiations have also been made for the shipment of part of CCC supplies of onion powder to India.

L. S. Fenn, Chief.